

inquisition was particularly convenient for them.<sup>1</sup> The lower classes, too, appear to have often preferred to incur fines rather than to discontinue their habits.<sup>2</sup> But, as we should expect, penance was more frequently inflicted on the poor, who were not too proud to submit to it, and could less afford to be perpetually buying exemption.<sup>3</sup> The wealthy not only paid fines instead of penance, but sometimes gave annually a lump sum to the more corrupt courts, to prevent inquiry. Through such depths was religion dragged in the transition from medieval to modern institutions. It was a despicable makeshift to avoid the enforcement of an outworn theory of Church jurisdiction, which was ceasing to have any basis in reality.<sup>4</sup>

Between the Bishops and the parish priests stood the Archdeacon, Deans and Cathedral clergy. It was in the distribution of these places that there was the openest field for the pluralist, and the busiest work for the political jobber. It was out of this class of benefices that the Pope was rewarded for his complaisance in the matter of bishoprics. The foreigners he appointed were nearly all of them Cardinals. They never came near England, except when their master sent them over as his ambassadors or legates. They were many of them French, or had connections and interests in France, for the Papal Court did not leave Avignon until 1377. It was probably true that much of the money collected from their property in England was used over there against the English arms. This struck the imagination of Parliament as a *reductio ad absurdum*.<sup>5</sup> An attempt to restrain such appointments had been made during the first war by the Acts of Provisors. The Pope was thereby forbidden to make appointments in England. The King, for reasons already alluded to, never enforced the statutes, and the money still streamed abroad to the Cardinals year by year. The Commons of the Good Parliament sent up a sheaf of angry petitions with the same unceasing but vain complaint. The King answered them

<sup>1</sup> *Rot. Parl.*, ii. 313-4; *P. PL*, A, iii. 45-7.

<sup>2</sup> *S. E. W.* iii. 166.

<sup>3</sup> *O. E. B.*, 90.

<sup>4</sup> *Rot. Parl.*, ii. 313-4, iii. 25; Chaucer, *Prologue and Friar's Tale*;  
*De Blas.*, 172-3; *S. E. W.*, iii. 166; *Matt.*, 35, 72, 249; *Sermoes*, ii. 151; *Pol. Poems*, i. 324.

\* *Rot. Parl.*, iii. 19, pet. xxvii.